



**H.R. 4286 – To award a congressional gold medal to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in recognition of her courageous and unwavering commitment to peace, nonviolence, human rights, and democracy in Burma.**

#### **FLOOR SITUATION**

H.R. 4286 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Joseph Crowley (D-NY) on December 5, 2007. This legislation was referred to the Committee on Financial Services, but was not considered.

H.R. 4286 is expected to be considered on the floor on December 17, 2007.

#### **BACKGROUND**

In 1988, the Burmese military assumed control of Burma and established rule through a military junta called the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), and changed the name of the country to Myanmar. The United States still officially refers to the country as Burma and the State Department describes Burma as “an underdeveloped agrarian country ruled by an authoritarian military regime. The country's government suppresses all expression of opposition to its rule.”

In May of 1990, multiparty elections were held in which the National League for Democracy (NLD) party won, although Burma's ruling military refused to allow the NLD's party's leader, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, to assume the office of Prime Minister and subsequently placed her under house arrest. For her non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was released in July 1995, and was once again placed under house arrest in September 2000. Following a second release, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and several of her followers were attacked by a government-sponsored mob on May 6, 2002, and she was then imprisoned at Insein Prison in Yangon, Burma.

On May 16, 2007, more than 50 world leaders released a letter demanding the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, a demand repeated by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, 14 United Nations human rights experts, the European Union, the United States, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and the foreign ministers of three ASEAN member states. However, her detention was extended on May 27, 2007.

On September 30, 2006, the United Nations Security Council officially included Burma on its agenda for the first time. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) denounced the ruling military regime of Burma on June 22, 2007, citing the use of detainees as porters for the armed forces and the systematic abuse and murder of both detainees and civilians. The ICRC stated that civilians, especially those residing near the Thai-Burma border, have been subjected to abuse such as destruction of their food supply and forced unpaid manual labor.

On August 15, 2007 Burma's ruling military junta, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), cancelled fuel subsidies resulting in the quintupling of the price of fuel, which had an immediate impact on the living conditions of the Burmese people and Burma's already devastated economy.

In reaction to this government action, student and democracy leaders took to the streets to protest the actions of the military junta. The tens of thousands of peaceful protestors demanded the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the Democratically elected Prime Minister of Burma, who has been under house arrest since her election.

These peaceful protests, often led by Buddhist monks, were met with brutal action from the Burmese military. The Burmese military opened fire on unarmed protestors and have arrested and imprisoned countless others. The Burmese regime mobilized armed soldiers to stop the protests and has stationed them in strategic locations throughout the country, including in religious centers, making it impossible for peaceful protestors to gather.

On September 30, 2007 a United Nations special envoy was able to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The Burmese regime has mobilized armed soldiers to stop the protests and has stationed them in strategic locations throughout the country, including in religious centers, making it impossible for peaceful protestors to gather. In recent years the Burmese military has destroyed more than 3,000 ethnic villages, displaced approximately 2 million Burmese people, more than 500,000 of which are internally displaced, and arrested approximately 1,300 individuals for expressing critical opinions of the government.

## **SUMMARY**

H.R. 4286 awards the congressional gold medal to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

## **STAFF CONTACT**

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